Former Students' Perspectives of the Impact of Their Alternative Education Experiences: A Narrative Inquiry

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Purpose

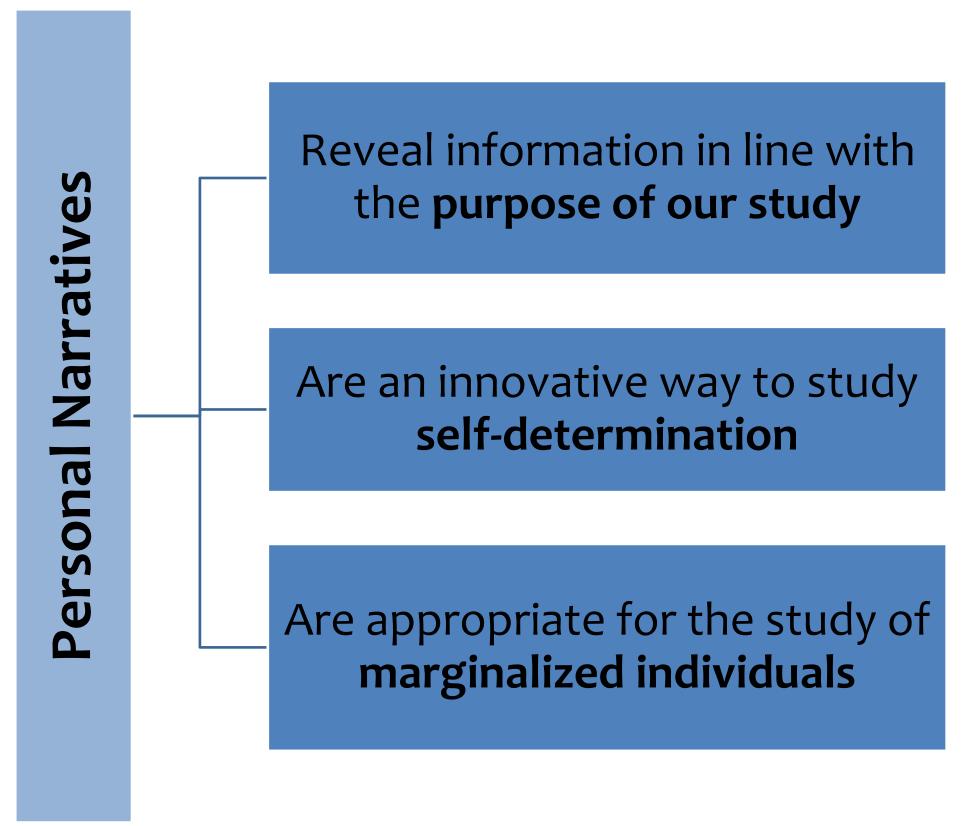
GOAL

To understand how supports for students in alternative education programs (AEP)s can be understood through a self-determination theory (SDT) lens



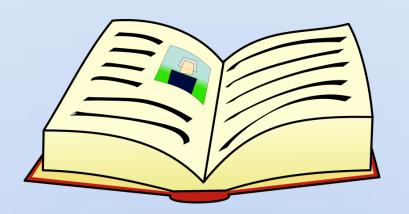
- (1) How did participants describe their experiences in the AEPs?
- (2) How did they describe how these experiences impacted them overall, during their time in the AEPs, & after their time in the AEPs?

Why Narrative?



Methods

Narrative Inquiry describes human actions through stories...



Participants

- 6 former AEP students
- all female
- · Attended AEPS
- in British Columbia
- that served 20 students (at any one time) between the ages of 15 & 19 who had been underserved in the mainstream school system
- Took part in two narrative interviews
- 1st interview- focussed on their life story generally
- 2nd interview- focussed on the study's research?s

Analysis

The two former AEP student interviews were treated as one in analyses...

- 1. Holisticcontent
- 1. read interview until pattern emerged
- 2. wrote down our 1st & general impressions
- 3. decided on emergent & convergent themes
- 4. highlighted themes
- 5. documented our thoughts about themes
- *wrote narratives
- 2. Crossnarrative
- looked for themes across
 narratives

Findings

PARTICIPANTS DISCUSSED (i.e., cross-narrative themes)

1. Experiences in the AEPs



- Kind & caring teachers who offered instrumental academic guidance
- Close bonds between students that were fostered through activities that brought to light one another's unique challenges
- The opportunity to understand and use/develop **personal strengths**
- Life skills learning targeting important aspects of their non-academic lives

2. The overall impact of these experiences

autonomy, belonging & competence, which participants linked to:

Significance

Contributions to SDT...

Research

- 1. Used in-depth qualitative narrative interview method
- 2. Included youth attending AEPs

Theory

- 1. Identified conditions that helped students meet needs for autonomy, belonging, & competence within AEPs
- 2. Suggests the need for belonging may be at the forefront for female students

During AEP

self-esteem, academic self-efficacy, motivation to attend to school, & school persistence



After AEP

ability to garner resources, communication skills, & academic & career success

Next Steps

FUTURE STUDIES SHOULD CONSIDER ...

- Including a larger & more representative sample (e.g., representation from across the gender spectrum)
- Using experimental design (e.g., in order to draw cause-effect conclusions about the impact of the AEP characteristics participants identified on student outcomes)
- Drawing on other bodies of theory & research (e.g., psychological resilience)